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(54) Title: COMPOSITIONS AND METHODS FOR THE TREATMENT OF IMMUNE RELATED DISEASES

(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to compositions containing novel proteins and methods of using those compositions for the diagnosis and treatment of immune related diseases.

COMPOSITIONS AND METHODS FOR THE TREATMENT OF IMMUNE RELATED DISEASES

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Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to compositions and methods useful for the diagnosis and treatment of immune related diseases.

Background of the Invention

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Immune related and inflammatory diseases are the manifestation or consequence of fairly complex, often multiple interconnected biological pathways which in normal physiology are critical to respond to insult or injury, initiate repair from insult or injury, and mount innate and acquired defense against foreign organisms. Disease or pathology occurs when these normal physiological pathways cause additional insult or injury either as directly related to the intensity of the response, as a consequence of abnormal regulation or excessive stimulation, as a reaction to self, or as a combination of these.

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Though the genesis of these diseases often involves multistep pathways and often multiple different biological systems/pathways, intervention at critical points in one or more of these pathways can have an ameliorative or therapeutic effect. Therapeutic intervention can occur by either antagonism of a detrimental process/pathway or stimulation of a beneficial process/pathway.

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Many immune related diseases are known and have been extensively studied. Such diseases include immune-mediated inflammatory diseases, non-immune-mediated inflammatory diseases, infectious diseases, immunodeficiency diseases, neoplasia, *etc.*

25

T lymphocytes (T cells) are an important component of a mammalian immune response. T cells recognize antigens which are associated with a self-molecule encoded by genes within the major histocompatibility complex (MHC). The antigen may be displayed together with MHC molecules on the surface of antigen presenting cells, virus infected cells, cancer cells, grafts, *etc.* The T cell system eliminates these altered cells which pose a health threat to the host mammal. T cells include helper T cells and cytotoxic T cells. Helper T cells proliferate extensively following recognition of an antigen-MHC complex on an antigen presenting cell. Helper T cells also secrete a variety of cytokines, *i.e.*, lymphokines, which play a central role in the activation of B cells, cytotoxic T cells and a variety of other cells which participate in the immune response.

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Immune related diseases could be treated by suppressing the immune response. Using neutralizing antibodies that inhibit molecules having immune stimulatory activity would be beneficial in the treatment of immune-mediated and inflammatory diseases. Molecules which inhibit the immune response can be utilized (proteins directly or via the use of antibody agonists) to inhibit the immune response and thus ameliorate immune related disease.

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T cells play a central role in host defense. T cells are able to modulate the immune response of other cell lineages through the production of a variety of cytokines and immune modulatory molecules. In addition they are responsible for surveying cells throughout the organism for the presence of non-self. This highly sophisticated process utilizes the T cell receptor (TCR), which is able to recognize and discriminate

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between self and non-self peptides displayed by the MHC complex on other cells. This process also integrates co-stimulatory signals that provide additional information to the T cell about the nature of the potential non-self threat. These two signals, the TCR signal and the co-stimulatory signal can be experimentally triggered by use of agonist antibodies such as certain antibodies to the T cell receptor component CD3, and the co-stimulatory receptor CD28. While T cells are essential components of normal immune function, it is believed that inappropriate T cell function underlies many very serious medical conditions including autoimmune disease. Diseases that are impacted by pathologic T cell function are thought to include asthma, arthritis, psoriasis, multiple sclerosis, inflammatory bowel disease, diabetes, graft versus host disease and many others. In these diseases the portion of the T cell repertoire that has a "memory" phenotype is thought to contribute to the disease pathology. It is therefore of great importance to understand the molecular events that occur upon activation of memory T cells. In humans, memory T cells can be identified through the use of the antigen CD45RO which is expressed on memory T cells but not on resting naïve T cells. The use of DNA microarrays provides a powerful experimental approach to identify molecular changes that occur upon activation of this critical cell population. Understanding the identity of molecules whose expression is altered upon memory T cell activation can enable therapeutic strategies that target the pathways impacted by these alterations in gene expression. Such therapeutic strategies can include the use of recombinant proteins, soluble receptors, antibodies, peptides, or small molecule drugs.

Despite the above identified advances in T cell research, there is a great need for additional diagnostic and therapeutic agents capable of detecting the presence of memory T cell mediated disorders in a mammal and for effectively reducing these disorders. Accordingly, it is an objective of the present invention to identify polypeptides that are overexpressed in memory T cells as compared to non-memory T cells, and to use those polypeptides, and their encoding nucleic acids, to produce compositions of matter useful in the therapeutic treatment and diagnostic detection of memory T cell mediated disorders in mammals.

Summary of the Invention

A. Embodiments

The present invention concerns compositions and methods useful for the diagnosis and treatment of immune related disease in mammals, including humans. The present invention is based on the identification of proteins (including agonist and antagonist antibodies) which are a result of stimulation of the immune response in mammals. Immune related diseases can be treated by suppressing or enhancing the immune response. Molecules that enhance the immune response stimulate or potentiate the immune response to an antigen. Molecules which stimulate the immune response can be used therapeutically where enhancement of the immune response would be beneficial. Alternatively, molecules that suppress the immune response attenuate or reduce the immune response to an antigen (*e.g.*, neutralizing antibodies) can be used therapeutically where attenuation of the immune response would be beneficial (*e.g.*, inflammation). Accordingly, the PRO polypeptides, agonists and antagonists thereof are also useful to prepare medicines and medicaments for the treatment of immune-related and inflammatory diseases. In a specific aspect, such medicines and medicaments comprise a therapeutically effective amount of a PRO polypeptide, agonist or antagonist thereof with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier. Preferably, the admixture is sterile.

In a further embodiment, the invention concerns a method of identifying agonists or antagonists to a

PRO polypeptide which comprises contacting the PRO polypeptide with a candidate molecule and monitoring a biological activity mediated by said PRO polypeptide. Preferably, the PRO polypeptide is a native sequence PRO polypeptide. In a specific aspect, the PRO agonist or antagonist is an anti-PRO antibody.

5 In another embodiment, the invention concerns a composition of matter comprising a PRO polypeptide or an agonist or antagonist antibody which binds the polypeptide in admixture with a carrier or excipient. In one aspect, the composition comprises a therapeutically effective amount of the polypeptide or antibody. In another aspect, when the composition comprises an immune stimulating molecule, the composition is useful for: (a) increasing infiltration of inflammatory cells into a tissue of a mammal in need thereof, (b) stimulating or enhancing an immune response in a mammal in need thereof, (c) increasing the proliferation of T-lymphocytes in a mammal in need thereof in response to an antigen, (d) stimulating the activity of T-lymphocytes or (e) increasing the vascular permeability. In a further aspect, when the composition comprises an immune inhibiting molecule, the composition is useful for: (a) decreasing infiltration of inflammatory cells into a tissue of a mammal in need thereof, (b) inhibiting or reducing an immune response in a mammal in need thereof, (c) decreasing the activity of T-lymphocytes or (d) decreasing the proliferation of T-lymphocytes in a mammal in need thereof in response to an antigen. In another aspect, the composition comprises a further active ingredient, which may, for example, be a further antibody or a cytotoxic or chemotherapeutic agent. Preferably, the composition is sterile.

In another embodiment, the invention concerns a method of treating an immune related disorder in a mammal in need thereof, comprising administering to the mammal an effective amount of a PRO polypeptide, an agonist thereof, or an antagonist thereto. In a preferred aspect, the immune related disorder is selected from the group consisting of: systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, juvenile chronic arthritis, spondyloarthropathies, systemic sclerosis, idiopathic inflammatory myopathies, Sjögren's syndrome, systemic vasculitis, sarcoidosis, autoimmune hemolytic anemia, autoimmune thrombocytopenia, thyroiditis, diabetes mellitus, immune-mediated renal disease, demyelinating diseases of the central and peripheral nervous systems such as multiple sclerosis, idiopathic demyelinating polyneuropathy or Guillain-Barré syndrome, and chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy, hepatobiliary diseases such as infectious, autoimmune chronic active hepatitis, primary biliary cirrhosis, granulomatous hepatitis, and sclerosing cholangitis, inflammatory bowel disease, gluten-sensitive enteropathy, and Whipple's disease, autoimmune or immune-mediated skin diseases including bullous skin diseases, erythema multiforme and contact dermatitis, psoriasis, allergic diseases such as asthma, allergic rhinitis, atopic dermatitis, food hypersensitivity and urticaria, immunologic diseases of the lung such as eosinophilic pneumonias, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and hypersensitivity pneumonitis, transplantation associated diseases including graft rejection and graft-versus-host-disease.

35 In another embodiment, the invention provides an antibody which specifically binds to any of the above or below described polypeptides. Optionally, the antibody is a monoclonal antibody, humanized antibody, antibody fragment or single-chain antibody. In one aspect, the present invention concerns an isolated antibody which binds a PRO polypeptide. In another aspect, the antibody mimics the activity of a PRO polypeptide (an agonist antibody) or conversely the antibody inhibits or neutralizes the activity of a PRO polypeptide (an antagonist antibody). In another aspect, the antibody is a monoclonal antibody, which

preferably has nonhuman complementarity determining region (CDR) residues and human framework region (FR) residues. The antibody may be labeled and may be immobilized on a solid support. In a further aspect, the antibody is an antibody fragment, a monoclonal antibody, a single-chain antibody, or an anti-idiotypic antibody.

5 In yet another embodiment, the present invention provides a composition comprising an anti-PRO antibody in admixture with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier. In one aspect, the composition comprises a therapeutically effective amount of the antibody. Preferably, the composition is sterile. The composition may be administered in the form of a liquid pharmaceutical formulation, which may be preserved to achieve extended storage stability. Alternatively, the antibody is a monoclonal antibody, an antibody fragment, a
10 humanized antibody, or a single-chain antibody.

In a further embodiment, the invention concerns an article of manufacture, comprising:

- (a) a composition of matter comprising a PRO polypeptide or agonist or antagonist thereof;
- (b) a container containing said composition; and
- (c) a label affixed to said container, or a package insert included in said container referring to
15 the use of said PRO polypeptide or agonist or antagonist thereof in the treatment of an immune related disease. The composition may comprise a therapeutically effective amount of the PRO polypeptide or the agonist or antagonist thereof.

In yet another embodiment, the present invention concerns a method of diagnosing an immune related disease in a mammal, comprising detecting the level of expression of a gene encoding a PRO polypeptide (a) in a test sample of tissue cells obtained from the mammal, and (b) in a control sample of
20 known normal tissue cells of the same cell type, wherein a higher or lower expression level in the test sample as compared to the control sample indicates the presence of immune related disease in the mammal from which the test tissue cells were obtained.

In another embodiment, the present invention concerns a method of diagnosing an immune disease
25 in a mammal, comprising (a) contacting an anti-PRO antibody with a test sample of tissue cells obtained from the mammal, and (b) detecting the formation of a complex between the antibody and a PRO polypeptide, in the test sample; wherein the formation of said complex is indicative of the presence or absence of said disease. The detection may be qualitative or quantitative, and may be performed in comparison with monitoring the complex formation in a control sample of known normal tissue cells of the
30 same cell type. A larger quantity of complexes formed in the test sample indicates the presence or absence of an immune disease in the mammal from which the test tissue cells were obtained. The antibody preferably carries a detectable label. Complex formation can be monitored, for example, by light microscopy, flow cytometry, fluorimetry, or other techniques known in the art. The test sample is usually obtained from an individual suspected of having a deficiency or abnormality of the immune system.

35 In another embodiment, the invention provides a method for determining the presence of a PRO polypeptide in a sample comprising exposing a test sample of cells suspected of containing the PRO polypeptide to an anti-PRO antibody and determining the binding of said antibody to said cell sample. In a specific aspect, the sample comprises a cell suspected of containing the PRO polypeptide and the antibody binds to the cell. The antibody is preferably detectably labeled and/or bound to a solid support.

40 In another embodiment, the present invention concerns an immune-related disease diagnostic kit,

comprising an anti-PRO antibody and a carrier in suitable packaging. The kit preferably contains instructions for using the antibody to detect the presence of the PRO polypeptide. Preferably the carrier is pharmaceutically acceptable.

5 In another embodiment, the present invention concerns a diagnostic kit, containing an anti-PRO antibody in suitable packaging. The kit preferably contains instructions for using the antibody to detect the PRO polypeptide.

10 In another embodiment, the invention provides a method of diagnosing an immune-related disease in a mammal which comprises detecting the presence or absence of a PRO polypeptide in a test sample of tissue cells obtained from said mammal, wherein the presence or absence of the PRO polypeptide in said test sample is indicative of the presence of an immune-related disease in said mammal.

In another embodiment, the present invention concerns a method for identifying an agonist of a PRO polypeptide comprising:

(a) contacting cells and a test compound to be screened under conditions suitable for the induction of a cellular response normally induced by a PRO polypeptide; and

15 (b) determining the induction of said cellular response to determine if the test compound is an effective agonist, wherein the induction of said cellular response is indicative of said test compound being an effective agonist.

20 In another embodiment, the invention concerns a method for identifying a compound capable of inhibiting the activity of a PRO polypeptide comprising contacting a candidate compound with a PRO polypeptide under conditions and for a time sufficient to allow these two components to interact and determining whether the activity of the PRO polypeptide is inhibited. In a specific aspect, either the candidate compound or the PRO polypeptide is immobilized on a solid support. In another aspect, the non-immobilized component carries a detectable label. In a preferred aspect, this method comprises the steps of:

25 (a) contacting cells and a test compound to be screened in the presence of a PRO polypeptide under conditions suitable for the induction of a cellular response normally induced by a PRO polypeptide; and

(b) determining the induction of said cellular response to determine if the test compound is an effective antagonist.

30 In another embodiment, the invention provides a method for identifying a compound that inhibits the expression of a PRO polypeptide in cells that normally express the polypeptide, wherein the method comprises contacting the cells with a test compound and determining whether the expression of the PRO polypeptide is inhibited. In a preferred aspect, this method comprises the steps of:

(a) contacting cells and a test compound to be screened under conditions suitable for allowing expression of the PRO polypeptide; and

(b) determining the inhibition of expression of said polypeptide.

35 In yet another embodiment, the present invention concerns a method for treating an immune-related disorder in a mammal that suffers therefrom comprising administering to the mammal a nucleic acid molecule that codes for either (a) a PRO polypeptide, (b) an agonist of a PRO polypeptide or (c) an antagonist of a PRO polypeptide, wherein said agonist or antagonist may be an anti-PRO antibody. In a preferred embodiment, the mammal is human. In another preferred embodiment, the nucleic acid is administered via *ex vivo* gene therapy. In a further preferred embodiment, the nucleic acid is comprised

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within a vector, more preferably an adenoviral, adeno-associated viral, lentiviral or retroviral vector.

In yet another aspect, the invention provides a recombinant viral particle comprising a viral vector consisting essentially of a promoter, nucleic acid encoding (a) a PRO polypeptide, (b) an agonist polypeptide of a PRO polypeptide, or (c) an antagonist polypeptide of a PRO polypeptide, and a signal sequence for cellular secretion of the polypeptide, wherein the viral vector is in association with viral structural proteins. Preferably, the signal sequence is from a mammal, such as from a native PRO polypeptide.

In a still further embodiment, the invention concerns an *ex vivo* producer cell comprising a nucleic acid construct that expresses retroviral structural proteins and also comprises a retroviral vector consisting essentially of a promoter, nucleic acid encoding (a) a PRO polypeptide, (b) an agonist polypeptide of a PRO polypeptide or (c) an antagonist polypeptide of a PRO polypeptide, and a signal sequence for cellular secretion of the polypeptide, wherein said producer cell packages the retroviral vector in association with the structural proteins to produce recombinant retroviral particles.

In a still further embodiment, the invention provides a method of increasing the activity of T-lymphocytes in a mammal comprising administering to said mammal (a) a PRO polypeptide, (b) an agonist of a PRO polypeptide, or (c) an antagonist of a PRO polypeptide, wherein the activity of T-lymphocytes in the mammal is increased.

In a still further embodiment, the invention provides a method of decreasing the activity of T-lymphocytes in a mammal comprising administering to said mammal (a) a PRO polypeptide, (b) an agonist of a PRO polypeptide, or (c) an antagonist of a PRO polypeptide, wherein the activity of T-lymphocytes in the mammal is decreased.

In a still further embodiment, the invention provides a method of increasing the proliferation of T-lymphocytes in a mammal comprising administering to said mammal (a) a PRO polypeptide, (b) an agonist of a PRO polypeptide, or (c) an antagonist of a PRO polypeptide, wherein the proliferation of T-lymphocytes in the mammal is increased.

In a still further embodiment, the invention provides a method of decreasing the proliferation of T-lymphocytes in a mammal comprising administering to said mammal (a) a PRO polypeptide, (b) an agonist of a PRO polypeptide, or (c) an antagonist of a PRO polypeptide, wherein the proliferation of T-lymphocytes in the mammal is decreased.

B. Additional Embodiments

In other embodiments of the present invention, the invention provides vectors comprising DNA encoding any of the herein described polypeptides. Host cell comprising any such vector are also provided. By way of example, the host cells may be CHO cells, *E. coli*, or yeast. A process for producing any of the herein described polypeptides is further provided and comprises culturing host cells under conditions suitable for expression of the desired polypeptide and recovering the desired polypeptide from the cell culture.

In other embodiments, the invention provides chimeric molecules comprising any of the herein described polypeptides fused to a heterologous polypeptide or amino acid sequence. Example of such chimeric molecules comprise any of the herein described polypeptides fused to an epitope tag sequence or a Fc region of an immunoglobulin.

In another embodiment, the invention provides an antibody which specifically binds to any of the above or below described polypeptides. Optionally, the antibody is a monoclonal antibody, humanized antibody, antibody fragment or single-chain antibody.

In yet other embodiments, the invention provides oligonucleotide probes useful for isolating
5 genomic and cDNA nucleotide sequences or as antisense probes, wherein those probes may be derived from any of the above or below described nucleotide sequences.

In other embodiments, the invention provides an isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes a PRO polypeptide.

In one aspect, the isolated nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide sequence having at least
10 about 80% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 81% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 82% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 83% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 84% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 85% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 86% nucleic acid sequence identity,
alternatively at least about 87% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 88% nucleic acid
15 sequence identity, alternatively at least about 89% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 90% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 91% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 92% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 93% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 94% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 95% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 96% nucleic acid sequence identity,
20 alternatively at least about 97% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 98% nucleic acid sequence identity and alternatively at least about 99% nucleic acid sequence identity to (a) a DNA molecule encoding a PRO polypeptide having a full-length amino acid sequence as disclosed herein, an amino acid sequence lacking the signal peptide as disclosed herein, an extracellular domain of a transmembrane protein, with or without the signal peptide, as disclosed herein or any other specifically defined fragment of the full-
25 length amino acid sequence as disclosed herein, or (b) the complement of the DNA molecule of (a).

In other aspects, the isolated nucleic acid molecule comprises a nucleotide sequence having at least about 80% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 81% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 82% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 83% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 84% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about
30 85% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 86% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 87% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 88% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 89% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 90% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 91% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 92% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 93% nucleic acid
35 sequence identity, alternatively at least about 94% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 95% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 96% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 97% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 98% nucleic acid sequence identity and alternatively at least about 99% nucleic acid sequence identity to (a) a DNA molecule comprising the coding sequence of a full-length PRO polypeptide cDNA as disclosed herein, the coding
40 sequence of a PRO polypeptide lacking the signal peptide as disclosed herein, the coding sequence of an

extracellular domain of a transmembrane PRO polypeptide, with or without the signal peptide, as disclosed herein or the coding sequence of any other specifically defined fragment of the full-length amino acid sequence as disclosed herein, or (b) the complement of the DNA molecule of (a).

In a further aspect, the invention concerns an isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a
5 nucleotide sequence having at least about 80% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 81% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 82% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 83% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 84% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 85% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 86% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 87% nucleic acid sequence identity,
10 alternatively at least about 88% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 89% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 90% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 91% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 92% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 93% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 94% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 95% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 96% nucleic acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 97% nucleic acid sequence identity,
15 alternatively at least about 98% nucleic acid sequence identity and alternatively at least about 99% nucleic acid sequence identity to (a) a DNA molecule that encodes the same mature polypeptide encoded by any of the human protein cDNAs as disclosed herein, or (b) the complement of the DNA molecule of (a).

Another aspect the invention provides an isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide
20 sequence encoding a PRO polypeptide which is either transmembrane domain-deleted or transmembrane domain-inactivated, or is complementary to such encoding nucleotide sequence, wherein the transmembrane domain(s) of such polypeptide are disclosed herein. Therefore, soluble extracellular domains of the herein described PRO polypeptides are contemplated.

Another embodiment is directed to fragments of a PRO polypeptide coding sequence, or the
25 complement thereof, that may find use as, for example, hybridization probes, for encoding fragments of a PRO polypeptide that may optionally encode a polypeptide comprising a binding site for an anti-PRO antibody or as antisense oligonucleotide probes. Such nucleic acid fragments are usually at least about 20 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 30 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 40 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 50 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 60
30 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 70 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 80 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 90 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 100 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 110 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 120 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 130 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 140 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 150 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 160
35 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 170 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 180 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 190 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 200 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 250 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 300 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 350 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 400 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 450 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 500
40 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 600 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 700

nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 800 nucleotides in length, alternatively at least about 900 nucleotides in length and alternatively at least about 1000 nucleotides in length, wherein in this context the term "about" means the referenced nucleotide sequence length plus or minus 10% of that referenced length. It is noted that novel fragments of a PRO polypeptide-encoding nucleotide sequence may be determined in a routine manner by aligning the PRO polypeptide-encoding nucleotide sequence with other known nucleotide sequences using any of a number of well known sequence alignment programs and determining which PRO polypeptide-encoding nucleotide sequence fragment(s) are novel. All of such PRO polypeptide-encoding nucleotide sequences are contemplated herein. Also contemplated are the PRO polypeptide fragments encoded by these nucleotide molecule fragments, preferably those PRO polypeptide fragments that comprise a binding site for an anti-PRO antibody.

In another embodiment, the invention provides isolated PRO polypeptide encoded by any of the isolated nucleic acid sequences herein above identified.

In a certain aspect, the invention concerns an isolated PRO polypeptide, comprising an amino acid sequence having at least about 80% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 81% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 82% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 83% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 84% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 85% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 86% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 87% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 88% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 89% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 90% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 91% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 92% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 93% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 94% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 95% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 96% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 97% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 98% amino acid sequence identity and alternatively at least about 99% amino acid sequence identity to a PRO polypeptide having a full-length amino acid sequence as disclosed herein, an amino acid sequence lacking the signal peptide as disclosed herein, an extracellular domain of a transmembrane protein, with or without the signal peptide, as disclosed herein or any other specifically defined fragment of the full-length amino acid sequence as disclosed herein.

In a further aspect, the invention concerns an isolated PRO polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence having at least about 80% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 81% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 82% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 83% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 84% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 85% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 86% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 87% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 88% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 89% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 90% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 91% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 92% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 93% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 94% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 95% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 96% amino acid

sequence identity, alternatively at least about 97% amino acid sequence identity, alternatively at least about 98% amino acid sequence identity and alternatively at least about 99% amino acid sequence identity to an amino acid sequence encoded by any of the human protein cDNAs as disclosed herein.

5 In a specific aspect, the invention provides an isolated PRO polypeptide without the N-terminal signal sequence and/or the initiating methionine and is encoded by a nucleotide sequence that encodes such an amino acid sequence as herein before described. Processes for producing the same are also herein described, wherein those processes comprise culturing a host cell comprising a vector which comprises the appropriate encoding nucleic acid molecule under conditions suitable for expression of the PRO polypeptide and recovering the PRO polypeptide from the cell culture.

10 Another aspect the invention provides an isolated PRO polypeptide which is either transmembrane domain-deleted or transmembrane domain-inactivated. Processes for producing the same are also herein described, wherein those processes comprise culturing a host cell comprising a vector which comprises the appropriate encoding nucleic acid molecule under conditions suitable for expression of the PRO polypeptide and recovering the PRO polypeptide from the cell culture.

15 In yet another embodiment, the invention concerns agonists and antagonists of a native PRO polypeptide as defined herein. In a particular embodiment, the agonist or antagonist is an anti-PRO antibody or a small molecule.

In a further embodiment, the invention concerns a method of identifying agonists or antagonists to a PRO polypeptide which comprise contacting the PRO polypeptide with a candidate molecule and monitoring
20 a biological activity mediated by said PRO polypeptide. Preferably, the PRO polypeptide is a native PRO polypeptide.

In a still further embodiment, the invention concerns a composition of matter comprising a PRO polypeptide, or an agonist or antagonist of a PRO polypeptide as herein described, or an anti-PRO antibody, in combination with a carrier. Optionally, the carrier is a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

25 Another embodiment of the present invention is directed to the use of a PRO polypeptide, or an agonist or antagonist thereof as herein before described, or an anti-PRO antibody, for the preparation of a medicament useful in the treatment of a condition which is responsive to the PRO polypeptide, an agonist or antagonist thereof or an anti-PRO antibody.

30 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The Figures 1-2442 show the nucleic acids of the invention and their encoded PRO polypeptides.

Figure 1 shows a nucleotide sequence (SEQ ID NO:1) of a native sequence PRO84739 cDNA,
35 wherein SEQ ID NO:1 is a clone designated herein as "DNA329084".

Figure 2 shows the amino acid sequence (SEQ ID NO:2) derived from the coding sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 shown in Figure 1.

Figure 3 shows a nucleotide sequence (SEQ ID NO:3) of a native sequence PRO61679 cDNA, wherein SEQ ID NO3: is a clone designated herein as "DNA273712".